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DE RUEHAA #1131 2401229

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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1429

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0424

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 4214

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2026

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 0219

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1891

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2462

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001131

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB

PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON

COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EPET](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MURADOV OUT AS STATE AGENCY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REF: ASHGABAT 1103

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia R. Curran for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Chevron's Country Manager called us late on August 27 to report that, when he attempted to send documents to the Executive Director of the State Agency for Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources, his intern was told that Bayrammurat Muradov is no longer Executive Director. Instead, the Chairman of the TurkmenGaz State Concern, Yagshygeldi Kakayev, has been appointed the new State Agency Executive Director. (COMMENT: During a subsequent embassy phone call to the State Agency, we were told that the appointment of the unnamed new director still had not been officially made. END COMMENT.) The Minister of Oil and Gas, Baymurat Hojamuhamedov, was moved to replace Kakayev at TurkmenGaz, and the deputy Minister of Oil and Gas has been moved up to replace Hojamuhamedov. There is no news about what is happening to Muradov, nor has there been any indication whether anything has happened to the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Oil and Gas, Tachberdi Tagiyev.

¶2. (C) Wintershall country manager Kal Sandhu confirmed to emboff on August 27 that Muradov is out. Muradov called him earlier on August 27 to say that he was leaving and that Kakayev would replace him. According to Sandhu, Muradov was in a very good mood, stating that either he would be "appointed or ordered" to his next position. Muradov said he had wanted to stay until the new Petroleum Law was published, but then to move on. Muradov also reportedly stressed to Sandhu that Kakayev is very smart and very highly regarded, even by his own people. Kakayev, Muradov pointed out, was the key negotiator for the production sharing agreement with the China National Petroleum Corporation and is Turkmenistan's main negotiator with Gazprom.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: We are still trying to find out exactly

what this means. There have been rumors since the State Agency's establishment that Muradov and Tagiyev never really got on: Muradov, though a strategic thinker, lacks a technical knowledge of the hydrocarbon sector, while Tagiyev, a technocrat, lacks a strategic perspective. On the surface, this looks as if Turkmenistan's technocrats -- headed by Tagiyev -- may have scored a victory. With the new Petroleum Law giving the State Agency substantially beefed-up responsibilities (reftel), however, Muradov -- and President Berdimuhamedov, to whom he is reported to be quite close -- may have recognized that the State Agency needs somebody with more technical expertise in place, and most oil company representatives agree that there is nobody in the government with more gas expertise than Kakayev. END COMMENT.

CURRAN